R. J. Reynolds Boosts Stake In Cigarettes

WINSTON-SALEM, N. C. — In a move it said symbolizes its faith "in the continued success of everyone in the tobacco industry—growers, warehousemen, distributors and manufacturers alike" and its own "determination to remain the nation's largest manufacturer of cigarettes," R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. on Friday announced a $7,000,000 expansion program for its Whitaker Park cigarette manufacturing plant here, described as the world's largest.

The program, announced by A. H. Galloway, Reynolds' president and chief executive officer, calls for the addition of 128,000 square feet to the Whitaker Park plant, bringing the total floor space at the facility to al-

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most 750,000 square feet. The new space will be used for tobacco blending, tobacco processing, shipping and material storage.

Mr. Galloway said the expansion of Whitaker Park represents not only extra space to meet current production requirements, but room for growth to meet increased demands of the future.

Construction on the Whitaker Park addition is scheduled to begin this month and be completed by spring of 1970. Design, construction and all interior finishing will be handled by Reynolds' engineering department, which also built the existing Whitaker Park facilities nearly eight years ago.

The capacity for future expansion was one of the specifications in the design of the original Whitaker Park plant. Thus, construction of the addition will be facilitated by removing precast concrete exterior wall units.

"Reynolds' concept in building Whitaker Park," Mr. Galloway said, "was to create a completely integrated cigarette manufacturing facility with capabilities for tobacco blending, making and packing cigarettes, shipping and storing necessary production materials.

"The new space will increase Whitaker Park's capacity to do all these things as well as increase the overall manufacturing efficiency at the plant."

Most of the tobacco blending for Reynolds is currently being done in facilities in downtown Winston-Salem that are working beyond the production levels for which they were designed. Congestion in the downtown area has made expansion to meet increased production demands virtually impossible.

The downtown blending operation will continue full-time even after the Whitaker Park addition is completed. Company officials said the expansion program will have little effect on Reynolds employment either in hiring new personnel or in transferring current employes.

The Whitaker Park plant was completed in 1961 and is but one part of the 296-acre Whitaker Park Center north of downtown Winston-Salem which also includes extensive tobacco storage facilities and Reynolds' recently dedicated $9,000,000 Development Center.

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